

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans

Statement

STATEMENT OF ROWAN GOULD, DEPUTY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR FISHERIES, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE AND OCEANS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, REGARDING REAUTHORIZATION OF THE YUKON RIVER SALMON ACT

MARCH 11, 1999

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee to support the reauthorization of the Yukon River Salmon Act. The reauthorization of this law will promote U.S. interests in international fisheries and provide for continued restoration and enhancement of Canadian origin salmon stocks in the Yukon River.

The Yukon River Salmon Act (P.L. 104-43) implemented the February 3, 1995 International Interim Agreement for conservation of salmon stocks originating from the Yukon River in Canada. The Act established the Yukon River Panel and authorized appropriations to carry out the responsibilities of the United States. During fiscal years 1996, 1997, and 1998 considerable progress was made to restore and enhance salmon runs originating in Canada through projects funded with the appropriations made available each year. The Interim Agreement expired in December 31, 1997, but was extended through March 31, 1998, by mutual agreement of the two countries. Although the U.S. and Canada were unable to reach concurrence on a long-term agreement prior to the expiration, the two parties have continued to informally discuss resolution of issues involving the long-term sharing of restored runs of Canadian-origin chinook and chum salmon. A workshop has been scheduled for April 1999, between fishers from both sides, in an attempt to resolve standing differences.

Until reauthorization, the Department of the Interior will continue to support the Yukon River Panel and Advisory Committee to pursue public-private cooperative projects in the U.S. (Alaska) portion of the Yukon drainage and to assure stakeholder representation in ongoing activities. In the interim, the Department of the Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will continue to support salmon restoration and enhancement projects benefitting Yukon River stocks.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer the views of the Department of the Interior.

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